

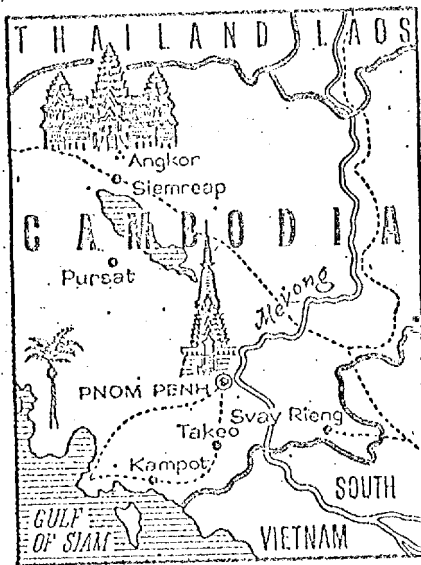
AROUND THE WORLD

I. ANDRONOV

PROVING GROUND

FOR THE GUAM

DOCTRINE



CAMBODIA is a comparatively recent victim of American Imperialist aggression in Indo-China—U.S. forces invaded it only last year. The political prologue, it may be said, was the Guam doctrine—the new course in Asia proclaimed by President Nixon two years ago at the U.S. air force base in Guam. As put by Nixon himself, the point of this doctrine is that the United States must play a substantial role in Asia but would like the problem of war and the responsibility for it to be assumed in ever greater degree by the Asian countries themselves. In the opinion of many Asian public leaders and publications the veiled meaning of this is that Washington wants to "pit Asians against Asians," that is, to have its war in Asia fought by others in the selfish interests of the U.S. ruling element. The tempestuous events of the

last eighteen months in the once tranquil country of Cambodia offer a classic example of how this is worked in practice.

YANKES IN PNOM PENH

Washington makes no secret now of its massive bomb strikes against vast areas of Cambodia, but all its other military operations against Cambodia's patriotic forces are painstakingly camouflaged by its official representatives in the Cambodian capital. This summer, for instance, quite a few groups of American servicemen were flown into Pnom Penh from Saigon, but in each case they were dressed as civilians. Thus "camouflaged," the visitors were then deposited in various parts of the country by U.S. Embassy helicopters. This operation, directed by the Pentagon and the CIA, is kept secret from American and world public opinion. What is more, it is conducted in defiance of the ban imposed by the U.S. Congress on American land operations in Cambodia. But in Pnom Penh itself, it is widely known that the Pentagon's "special forces" units—the notorious Green Berets—systematically make raids deep into the interior of guerilla areas. Very often they disguise themselves as insurgents. The Green Berets carry out sabotage and terrorist missions in the guerilla areas and pick targets for U.S. bombers.

American army planes can be seen daily in the Pnom Penh airport though their presence is partly concealed: the identification marks on some of the planes have been painted over. Last January guerillas blew up a few American planes in the airport and since then the building has remained half in ruins. The surviving part is roofless and its windows are gaping holes. The wind blows through it freely and the floor is strewn with rubble and plaster. But out on the airfield American military transports and sharp-nosed fighters again come and go.

The road from the airport to the capital is blocked off every three hundred metres by empty petrol barrels, so that no car can speed past. Near these roadblocks are stationed groups of soldiers equipped with American quick-firing rifles and field telephones, and wearing American green tropical uniforms and helmets.

In the city there are coils of barbed wire everywhere. The barbed wire is strung on poles right on the sidewalks in front of all government buildings—whether a post office or a ministry. The more important the office, the more wire there is in front of it. First place is taken by the Defence Ministry: the street it stands on is covered with rows of it, and at its walls are piles of sandbags behind which soldiers stand, by ready to man machine-guns. There are also machine-gun nests at the gates of nearly all government offices. From time to time people calling at them are carefully searched at gun-point. At the press centre a representative of the military command cautions journalists that it is risky to take photographs in the streets—a nervous soldier may open fire without warning. A state of emergency has been declared in the capital, for guerilla units have surrounded it and by night approach its suburbs. No one may enter the city after sunset; all roads are blocked by government soldiers who huddle fearfully around the American M-113 armoured cars placed at their disposal.

Artillery batteries have been mounted even in the centre of the city, on the Mekong embankment, their guns trained on the opposite bank from which guerillas sometimes open up fire with mortars and mobile rocket launchers. From time to time they even blow up a munitions dump right in the city or shower hand grenades on picked targets, such as the Saigon mission. After one such attack the South Vietnam ambassador landed in hospital. A guerilla attack on the arsenal in June caused an explosion of such force that the flames rose 120 metres and the surrounding streets were showered with shell and mine fragments mixed with stone and rubble.

From a white four-storey building on the corner of one of the Pnom Penh boulevards and Avenue Mao Tse-tung, near the Mekong embankment, hangs the American flag. This is the American Embassy building and the Americans occupying it are jestingly called "the Yankees from Mao Street." Recently, though, the street was renamed—either at the request of the American diplomats or because of the change in the political climate of the Cambodian capital.

The American Embassy in Pnom

continued